

I.3  
7/15/01

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION REPORT

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



277415

**I. HEADING**

DATE:  
July 15, 2001

SUBJECT:  
Emergency Response, ATOFINA Chemical Release. Riverview, Wayne Co, Michigan

FROM:  
Michelle Jaster, OSC, Ralph Dollhopf, OSC and Robert Buckley OSC  
U.S. EPA, RS1, Grosse Ile, MI (Email: [jaster.michelle@epa.gov](mailto:jaster.michelle@epa.gov) )

TO:  
C. Stanton, USEPA, OSWER, Washington, DC  
R. Karl, Chief, ERB, Chicago, IL  
J. El-Zein, Chief RS1, Grosse Ile, MI  
W. Messenger, Chief, U.S. EPA, ERB/ESS, Chicago, IL  
T. Kruger, U.S. EPA, ORC, Chicago, IL  
C. Allen, Public Affairs ERB, Chicago, IL  
J. LaFanara, ERT, Edison, NJ  
R. Nickle, ATSDR, Atlanta, GA  
M. Johnson, ATSDR, Chicago, IL  
S. Garrity, USCD MSO Detroit, MI  
D. Reinhardt, AST, USCG, Fort Dix, NJ  
M. Chezick, DOI< Philadelphia, PA  
J. Beckius, Jr., NTSB, Washington, DC  
L. Woolley, AQD, MDEQ, Livonia, MI  
S. Tackitt, Wayne Co. DH Wayne MI  
A. Marouf, U.S. EPA, H&S, Chicago, IL  
D. Wade, MDCH, Lansing, MI  
Duty Officer, NRC, Washington, DC

POLREP 1 - Initial

**II. BACKGROUND**

Site No.:	Pending
Delivery Order Number:	NA
Response Authority:	CERCLA
CERCLIS ID Number:	NA
NPL Status:	Not on NPL
MDEQ Notification:	Yes
NRC Report(s):	572926 & 572941
Latitude/Longitude:	N 42°11'03", W 083°09'50"
Start Date:	July 14, 2001
Completion Date:	Pending

**III. SITE INFORMATION**

A. Incident Category

CERCLA-Emergency Response

B. Site Description

## 1. Site Location

The site is located at 17168 W Jefferson Av, Riverview, Wayne County, Michigan. The site is at the intersection of Pennsylvania Road and West Jefferson Avenue. Vacant, Industrial, Residential and Railroad properties surround the site.

## 2. Description of Threat

On Saturday July 14, 2001 at about 0430, a catastrophic fire occurred following the release of toxic methyl mercaptan from a railroad tankcar. The fire resulted in the deaths of three workers. The local fire department (Riverview) responded to a 911 call from the facility. The USCG MSO Detroit responded based on media reports. Local fire departments responded and an evacuation or shelter-in-place of four communities - Riverview, Grosse Ile, Trenton and Wyandotte - or parts thereof occurred. The Trenton Channel and the Detroit River were closed to boat traffic by the US and Canadian Coast Guards. The fire was reported to the National Response Center, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and others. There was concern about the safety of the tankcars - there are two methyl mercaptan and three chlorine. Operations at the plant could not be shut down immediately due to fire. The Riverview fire chief requested the USCG to obtain air monitoring assistance from the U.S. EPA in determining the air quality of the area to assure safety in rescinding the evacuation order. MSO Detroit mobilized Strike Team resources with Level A entry capability. The nearest downstream public water supply is Monroe. Tremendous quantities of water were used for fire suppression, with discharge to Monguagon Creek or the Trenton Channel of the Detroit River. No damages to Natural Resources were observed or reported. There was extensive print and electronic media coverage.

## IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

### A. Current Situation:

The fire was extinguished on Saturday, July 14, 2001. Most evacuated residents were allowed to return home about 1500 when the fire was out and mercaptan/chlorine leaks secured even before air monitoring data was available from US EPA. Those in proximity to the plant had a staggered reoccupation with the last in by about midnight.

### B. Actions Taken:

On Saturday, July 14, 2001, at approximately 0800 hours, U.S. EPA and START mobilized to the ATOFINA fire site to perform emergency response activities. U.S. EPA and START met with the local fire chief and the Coast Guard to gain background information about the site. A support facility was set up at the Emergency Operations Center at Response Section One offices on Grosse Ile. Additional START resources were obtained and a comprehensive air monitoring program instituted. This included PID, FID and Draeger tubes for SO<sub>2</sub>, Acid, Cl<sub>2</sub> and Methyl Mercaptan. In general the results were non-detect or low. The sampling points were visited a number of times and were upwind and downwind of the facility in affected area, including previously evacuated neighborhoods.

On Sunday, July 15, 2001, at approximately 0700 hours U.S. EPA and START resumed air monitoring. In addition, the TAGA (Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer) from ERT conducted real-time air monitoring for methyl mercaptan. Preliminary results indicated non-detectable concentrations. The TAGA "bus" traversed the route of prior monitoring. There was media interest in the vehicle. Air monitoring was conducted on equipment at Grosse Ile Public Safety Building at the request of the Police Department who operated in the plume during initial response.

C. Next Steps

Continue air monitoring at request of FOSC MSO Detroit. START handheld instruments and ERT's TAGA unit still being utilized.

D. Key Issues

None.

**V. COST INFORMATION**

Estimated site costs as of July 15, 2001: Not available.

**VI. OTHER INFORMATION**

The following URLs provide narrative and pictures about the incident from the Detroit News:

<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a01-247757.htm>  
<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a06-247726.htm>  
<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a06-247717.htm>  
<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a06-247719.htm>  
<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a01-247743.htm>

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION REPORT**

**I. HEADING**

**DATE:**

July 15, 2001

**SUBJECT:**

Emergency Response, ATOFINA Chemical Release. Riverview, Wayne Co, Michigan

**FROM:**

Michelle Jaster, OSC, Ralph Dollhopf, OSC and Robert Buckley OSC  
U.S. EPA, RS1, Grosse Ile, MI (Email: [jaster.michelle@epa.gov](mailto:jaster.michelle@epa.gov) )

**TO:**

C. Stanton, USEPA, OSWER, Washington, DC  
R. Karl, Chief, ERB, Chicago, IL  
J. El-Zein, Chief RS1, Grosse Ile, MI  
W. Messenger, Chief, U.S. EPA, ERB/ESS, Chicago, IL  
T. Kruger, U.S. EPA, ORC, Chicago, IL  
C. Allen, Public Affairs ERB, Chicago, IL  
J. LaFanara, ERT, Edison, NJ  
R. Nickle, ATSDR, Atlanta, GA  
M. Johnson, ATSDR, Chicago, IL  
S. Garrity, USCD MSO Detroit, MI  
D. Reinhardt, AST, USCG, Fort Dix, NJ  
M. Chezick, DOI< Philadelphia, PA  
J. Beckius, Jr., NTSB, Washington, DC  
L. Woolley, AQD, MDEQ, Livonia, MI  
S. Tackitt, Wayne Co. DH Wayne MI  
A. Marouf, U.S. EPA, H&S, Chicago, IL  
D. Wade, MDCH, Lansing, MI  
Duty Officer, NRC, Washington, DC

POLREP 1 - Initial

**II. BACKGROUND**

Site No.:	Pending
Delivery Order Number:	NA
Response Authority:	CERCLA
CERCLIS ID Number:	NA
NPL Status:	Not on NPL
MDEQ Notification:	Yes
NRC Report(s):	572926 & 572941
Latitude/Longitude:	N 42°11'03", W 083°09'50"
Start Date:	July 14, 2001
Completion Date:	Pending

### **III. SITE INFORMATION**

#### **A. Incident Category**

CERCLA-Emergency Response

#### **B. Site Description**

##### **1. Site Location**

The site is located at 17168 W Jefferson Av, Riverview, Wayne County, Michigan. The site is at the intersection of Pennsylvania Road and West Jefferson Avenue. Vacant, Industrial, Residential and Railroad properties surround the site.

##### **2. Description of Threat**

On Saturday July 14, 2001 at about 0430, a catastrophic fire occurred following the release of toxic methyl mercaptan from a railroad tankcar. The fire resulted in the deaths of three workers. The local fire department (Riverview) responded to a 911 call from the facility. The USCG MSO Detroit responded based on media reports. Local fire departments responded and an evacuation or shelter-in-place of four communities - Riverview, Grosse Ile, Trenton and Wyandotte - or parts thereof occurred. The Trenton Channel and the Detroit River were closed to boat traffic by the US and Canadian Coast Guards. The fire was reported to the National Response Center, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and others. There was concern about the safety of the tankcars - there are two methyl mercaptan and three chlorine. Operations at the plant could not be shut down immediately due to fire. The Riverview fire chief requested the USCG to obtain air monitoring assistance from the U.S. EPA in determining the air quality of the area to assure safety in rescinding the evacuation order. MSO Detroit mobilized Strike Team resources with Level A entry capability. The nearest downstream public water supply is Monroe. Tremendous quantities of water were used for fire suppression, with discharge to Monguagon Creek or the Trenton Channel of the Detroit River. No damages to Natural Resources were observed or reported. There was extensive print and electronic media coverage.

### **IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION**

#### **A. Current Situation:**

The fire was extinguished on Saturday, July 14, 2001. Most evacuated residents were allowed to return home about 1500 when the fire was out and mercaptan/chlorine leaks secured even before air monitoring data was available from US EPA. Those in proximity to the plant had a staggered reoccupation with the last in by about midnight.

#### **B. Actions Taken:**

On Saturday, July 14, 2001, at approximately 0800 hours, U.S. EPA and START mobilized to the ATOFINA fire site to perform emergency response activities. U.S. EPA and START met with the local fire chief and the Coast Guard to gain background information about the site. A support facility was set up at the Emergency Operations Center at Response Section One offices on Grosse Ile. Additional START resources were obtained and a comprehensive air monitoring program instituted. This included PID, FID and Draeger tubes for SO<sub>2</sub>, Acid, Cl<sub>2</sub> and Methyl Mercaptan. In general the results were non-detect or low. The sampling points were visited a number of times and were upwind and downwind of the facility in affected area, including previously evacuated neighborhoods.

On Sunday, July 15, 2001, at approximately 0700 hours U.S. EPA and START resumed air monitoring. In addition, the TAGA (Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer) from ERT conducted real-time air monitoring for methyl mercaptan. Preliminary results indicated non-detectable concentrations. The TAGA "bus" traversed the route of prior monitoring. There was media interest in the vehicle. Air monitoring was conducted on equipment at Grosse Ile Public Safety Building at the request of the Police Department who operated in the plume during initial response.

#### **C. Next Steps**

Continue air monitoring at request of FOSC MSO Detroit. START handheld instruments and ERT's TAGA unit still being utilized.

#### **D. Key Issues**

None.

#### **V. COST INFORMATION**

Estimated site costs as of July 15, 2001: Not available.

#### **VI. OTHER INFORMATION**

The following URLs provide narrative and pictures about the incident from the Detroit News:

<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a01-247757.htm>

<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a06-247726.htm>

<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a06-247717.htm>

<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a06-247719.htm>

<http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0107/15/a01-247743.htm>